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1. (Three Times Amended) A process for dewatering a slurry of hydrophilic particulate material comprising:

initially hydrophobizing said material using a surfactant;

adding a nonionic surfactant of HLB number less than 15 dissolved in at least one organic solvent;

agitating said slurry to allow for said nonionic surfactant to adsorb on the surface of said initially hydrophobized material so that its hydrophobicity is further increased; and subjecting the agitated slurry containing said material to a mechanical method of dewatering.

11. (Twice Times Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein said nonionic surfactant is selected from the group consisting of: fatty acids, fatty esters, phosphate esters, hydrophobic polymers, ethers, glycol derivatives, sarcosine derivatives, silicon-based surfactants and polymers, sorbitan derivatives, sucrose and glucose esters and derivatives, lanolin-based derivatives, glycerol esters, ethoxylated fatty esters, ethoxylated amines and amides, ethoxylated linear alcohols, ethoxylated tryglycerides, ethoxylated vegetable oils, and ethoxylated fatty acids.

12. (Three Times Amended) The process of claim 11 wherein said nonionic surfactant is blended with an oil of vegetable or animal origin.

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68. (Three Times Amended) The process for claim 67 wherin said particulate material comprises particles of less than 2 mm in size.

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69. (Amended) The process of claim 67 wherein said nonionic surfactant is selected from the group consisting of: fatty acids, fatty esters, phosphate esters, hydrophobic polymers, ethers, glycol derivatives, sarcosine derivatives, silicon-based surfactants and polymers, sorbitan derivatives, sucrose and glucose esters and derivatives, lanolin-based derivatives, glycerol esters, ethoylated fatty esters, ethoxylated amines and amides, ethoxylated linear alcohols, ethoxylated tryglycerides, ethoylated vegetable oils, and ethoxylated fatty acids.

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70. (Amended) The process of claim 67 wherein said nonionic surfactant is blended with an oil of vegetable or animal origin.

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72. (Amended) The process of claim 13, wherein said light hydrocarbon oils are selected from diesel oil, kerosene, gasoline, petroleum distillate, turpentine, naphtanic oils, and oils of vegetable or animal origin.

Please add new claims 74-78 as follows:

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74. The process of claim 1, wherein said hydrophilic particulate material is an oxide, phosphate, carbonate, silicate, clay or talc mineral, and the said surfactant that is used for the initial hydrophobization step has HLB number greater than 15.

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75. The process of claim 1, wherein said hydrophilic particulate material is a sulfide mineral and the said surfactant that is used for the initial hydrophobization step is a thiol-type surfactant.

76. The process of claim 75, wherein said thiol-type surfactant is selected from thiols, xanthates, thiophosphates, thionocarbamates, xanthogen formats, and thiourea.

77. The process of claim 71, wherein said light hydrocarbon oils are selected from diesel oil, kerosene, gasoline, petroleum distillate, turpentine, naphtanic oils, and oils of vegetable or animal origins.

78. The process of claim 71, wherein said short-chain alcohols have carbon atom numbers less than eight.

REMARKS

Responsive to the communication mailed December 18, 2002, Applicant provides the following remarks in an effort to more particularly point out the invention. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.